

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EXAMPLES OF GOOD CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP

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1. ALTHOUGH MANY U.S. SUBSIDIARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA HAVE DEVELOPED PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THEIR OWN NON-WHITE EMPLOYEES BY UPGRADING SCHOOLS, FINANCING CHILDRENS EDUCATION, PERSONAL LOANS, ETC., THEIR RECORD ON CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY IS NOT IMPRESSIVE. WHILE WE ARE NOT CERTAIN OF THE REASONS FOR THIS, THEY MAY INCLUDE: A) LACK OF IMAGINATION ON THE PART OF LOCAL MANAGERS, SOME OF WHOM ARE ONLY RECENTLY ENTERING THE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FIELD; B) EMPHASIS ON POLISHING THEIR IMAGE WITH RESPECT TO TREATMENT OF THEIR OWN EMPLOYEES; C) ECONOMIC RECESSION; D) DESIRE TO MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE AND THUS AVOID EVEN MORE U.S. ATTENTION WHICH COULD POSSIBLY INCREASE ADVERSE PRESSURE AT HOME TO DISINVEST; AND E) COMPLICATIONS THAT ARISE IN TRYING TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY PROGRAMS IN AN APARTHEID SOCIETY.

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2. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE LAST TYPE OF PROBLEM, WHEN ONE U.S. FIRM ASSISTED A LOCAL BLACK SCHOOL, IT FOUND ITSELF LINKED WITH BANTU EDUCATION AUTHORITIES IN PUBLICIZED OPENING CEREMONIES. SIWISS GROUPS RAISED FUNDS FOR A TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTITUTE IN BOPHUTHATSWANA AS A KIND OF PROTEST AGAINST SA RACIAL POLICIES. YET, WHEN ELABORATE INAGURATION CREMONIES WERE HELD, SA

OFFICIALS WERE PROMINENTLY INVOLVED AND SHARED CREDIT.

3. FOLLOWING ARE BEST EXAMPLES WE HAVE COME ACROSS OF GOOD MNC CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP:

A) A LARGE SOAP MANUFACTURING COMPANY, WHICH HAS AN EXTENSIVE COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAM COMPANY-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES INCLUDE MULTI-RACIAL AND BLACK SPORTING EVENTS SUCH AS GOLF AND TENNIS TOURNAMENTS AND TRAINING CLINICS; SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THREE BLACK DENTAL STUDENTS AND TWO BLACK SCHOOL TEACHERS; SPONSORSHIP OF ADULT EDUCATION FOR BLACKS (NOT NECESSARILY EMPLOYEES); AND SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE TO A LOCAL BLACK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. (THE COMPANY ALSO SPONSORS A SUMMER CAMP FOR EIGHT DAYS AT THE SEASIDE FOR CHILDREN OF ITS BLACK EMPLOYEES, BUT THIS IS, OF COURSE, OF DIRECT BENEFIT TO THE COMPANY.);

B) A LARGE COMPUTER FIRM IS EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY OF PUTTING UP TO THREE CHILDREN PER BLACK EMPLOYEE IN PRIVATE CONVENT (PREVIOUSLY ALL-WHITE) SCHOOLS. IN THE CONTEXT OF SEGREGATED EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA, THIS INITIATIVE COULD HAVE AN IMPORTANT DEMONSTRATION EFFECT IN HELPING SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY MOVE AWAY FROM INSTITUTIONALIZED DISCRIMINATION. THE SAME COMPANY IS ALSO ACTIVELY PURSUING THROUGH THE URBAN FOUNDATION AND OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN ORGANIZATIONS, THE POSSIBILITY OF INTRODUCING COMPUTER-BASED EDUCATION WHICH COULD GREATLY ASSIST THE NON-WHITE POPULATION OF THE COUNTRY;

C) ANOTHER LARGE COMPUTER FIRM SPONSORS A NATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT FOR BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS. THE FIRST PRIZE INCLUDES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AN EXPENSE PAID TRIP TO HAWAII TO COMPETE IN AN INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT;

D) A LARGE ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE COMPANY PROVIDED R25,000 SEVERAL YEARS AGO TO SUPPORT A LOCAL BLACK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL;

E) A SHAVING PRODUCTS COMPANY HAS ASSESSED THE SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF A NEIGHBORING BLACK TOWNSHIP WITH A VIEW TO BECOMING INVOLVED. IT HAS CONTACTED THE LOCAL SOUTH AFRICAN AUTHORITIES ON THE SUBJECT OF INCREASING THE NUMBER OF SCHOOLS OR, ALTERNATIVELY, UPGRADING EXISTING FACILITIES. UNFORTUNATELY, THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ARE RELUCTANT TO COOPERATE IN IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES. IN THE MEANTIME, THE FIRMS HAS BEEN PAYING THE SALARY OF ONE BLACK TEACHER FOR SOME YEARS.

4. THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN SOUTH AFRICA HAS BEEN CONSULTED IN A GENERAL WAY REGARDING EACH OF THESE SUBMISSIONS. THE CHAMBER HAS, SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN NOVEMBER 1977, BEGUN TO ENERGIZE THE LOCAL AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY ON THE QUESTION OF CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP. THE NUMBER OF COMMITTEES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED TO FOCUS ON PROBLEMS SUCH AS HOUSING AND EDUCATION. THE CHAMBER HAS ALSO NOT HESITATED TO APPROACH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT DIRECTLY WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RELAXING INSTITUTIONALIZED DISCRIMINATION AND IMPROVING LIVING

CONDITIONS FOR NON-WHITES.
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